



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** Universal Learning for All      **Name:** Tolu Igbalajobi  
**Other Team Members:**  
**Program:** Greater Houston Area Program  
**Trip Dates:** 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001      **Location Visited:** Harvard University  
**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 01

**Project Summary:** I attended the Harvard School of Education, "Universal Design for Learning Program" (UDL), because I wanted to learn more about multiple ways of learning not only for students with disabilities but for all students. UDL is a program that promotes inclusion of learning for all students in the same classroom, and varying instruction for all students because student learn in different ways. I think that the school curriculum needs to be diversified, and designed to address the broadest needs of all learners taking into consideration students' background, interests, and culture.

What inspired me was the fact that while teaching students with disabilities, I realized that all students can actually learn regardless of their disability if positively encouraged in an enabling environment, and allowing them opportunities to learn, giving them various choices while deemphasizing their disability.

UDL focuses on providing equal access to the curriculum involves much more than supplying every student with a textbook or a computer. Teachers need to ensure that students are actively engaged in learning. In addition, the subject matter needs to be cognitively challenging to students, and they need to be appropriately supported—regardless of their developmental level, cultural background, or learning style.

The UDL Solution

The institute addresses crucial questions about how to provide full access to the general education curriculum for all learners—especially those with disabilities—through Universal Design for Learning. The approach prepares educators to meet the challenge of teaching diverse learners in inclusive, standards-based classrooms.

UDL principles help educators customize their curriculum to serve learners with a wide variety of individual differences. A universally-designed curriculum (Rose and Meyer) offers:

- Multiple means of representation to give learners a variety of ways to acquire information and knowledge
- Multiple means of expression and action to provide learners with alternatives for demonstrating what they know
- Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn

I was inspired at the program when the presenters, Thomas Hehir and David Rose actually said research shows that all students can learn but that the environment contributes to the way they learn, deemphasizing student's disability, and the multiple ways to learning. Harvard school of education is fully equipped to meet the varied technological needs of diverse students, to enhance students learning based on their individual learning styles, and all students are given equal opportunity for admission regardless of any disability. The college deemphasizes students disability but rather places more emphasis on their positive attributes that encourages students to learn.

UDL Assumptions

- UDL is a paradigm shift
- Collaboration between general and special education teachers is essential
- Involvement of school, and district administrators
- All learners fall along a continuum of learner differences
- The curriculum is broken

**Career Impact:** I was personally challenged on this fellowship about how we need to encourage school administrators to learn more about the program, and how the districts should also become aware of the program. I was able to overcome my fears or obstacles knowing that I am currently in an administrative program and will encourage the use of the program as a teacher and an administrator. This program further encouraged my passion for learning and creating a positive impact in students' lives. I have improved my knowledge and exposure in the educational field, and learned new skills for my professional growth and to teach students so that they can be successful. My instructional strategies would be more interactive using the various strategies of the UDL program. In my classroom, I will have more authentic experiences to engage students in the classroom, and to share with my colleagues for a positive systemic change.

The UDL program has made available a website with several instructional activities, and planning guides that I can use to enhance students learning in the classroom. The UDL planning guide is a template to be used for creating a UDL vision, for identifying relevant

“environmental” factors that impact my vision, and for developing appropriate goals and strategic steps to actualize my vision.

**Classroom/Community Impact:** The fellowship will influence my classroom with the integration of the Universal Design for learning activities that are integrated into the curriculum so that all students can be successful. The information and the training will be shared with other teachers and parents so that they can see the positive impact in students learning. The fellowship will allow for the following in my classroom or school community:

- Students will be shown artifacts from Harvard University, PowerPoint presentations about my trip to Harvard, what I learnt and will share with them
- Students will realize that Harvard has opportunities for all students including students with disabilities because the classroom is designed with up to date technology that gives students the opportunity to be successful
- Students will be taught about the importance of diversity, and would be given an internet tour of the Harvard website to see how the students attending the college are diverse and multicultural.
- I will encourage collaboration with my peers to integrate UDL into teaching, and students will be encouraged to collaborate with their peers. Students will be given projects to work as groups, and group writing assignments that would be posted on the class website and available to everyone at any time of the day.
- I will develop cross-curricular instruction / sharing with other staff members, and staff and students will learn that there are multiple ways of learning, the importance of environmental impact on learning, and various programs available to accommodate multiple learning styles.
- Students will see the diversity in the participants that attended the program, and how we all had to work together in groups. This will be a model for students to work together with their peers so that everyone can be successful.
- Students will be encouraged to get involved with community service as young leaders, and I will also get involved with the school community to encourage parents to become involved in their students learning, and learn about the educational interactive online software available to enhance students learning.
- I will encourage the school and district to challenge students and educate them about multiple intelligences.
- I will like to engage in researching the effect of UDL program on students, parents, and the community, and the effect of deemphasizing the disability in students to encourage learning.
- I will try to use experts from the community to educate parents about multiple ways to learning, and that all students regardless of the disability can be successful, learn a skill, and attend a two year college or even a four year college like Harvard University.

**Open Response:** This fellowship has further enhanced my current knowledge about multiple ways of learning, multiple intelligences, Neuro Science and brain networks. This fellowship has spurred me to act on educating the public that having a disability does not mean you cannot learn, but that an enabling environment has a lot to do with how and what all students all. I am working on a school-wide presentation of the UDL program and the importance of systemic change to meet the demands of our innovative society. My students will also work on several presentations based on the new materials from my fellowship experience, so that we can be published and recognized for our work in the classroom, at the school, and district level. Realizing the promise of Universal Design for Learning requires the collaboration of experts in teaching, educational administration, policymaking, technology, and publishing. The institute will help me as a teacher to better understand my responsibilities in teaching diverse learners, and it has also provided practical, hands-on solutions for reaching and teaching all learners. I hope to further my research during my Doctoral Program in Education.

**Quote:** “Mastery of Learning- Multiple Intelligences- Multiple ways of representation, expression, and engagement.” – Harvard University

## Photos:

Harvard University

UDL Presenters

Discussion Session with Grace

Neuro-Science presentation by David Rose

Harvard Library

Presentation by Thomas Hehir

Question and Answer Session with a school principal

Review and Blog Session at the Library